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ABSTRACT

This brochure describes the following 1991 international relations programs of the American Library Association (ALA): (1) the Books for Romania Program, which resulted in donations of books, journals, microfilm products, and microfilm readers valued at approximately $5 million to Rumanian libraries; (2) the Colloquium on Library Science, a colloquium for Rumanian librarians on current issues in library services, education, and organization; (3) the Library/Book Fellows Program, which placed U.S. librarians in working situations overseas; (4) the World Conference on Education for All during which educators, government officials, social scientists, and other policymakers from 155 countries and more than 150 non-governmental organizations produced a plan to solve education problems by the year 2000; and (5) a project that made bibliographic records produced by the All-Union Book Chamber of the Russian Federation available worldwide in the UNIMARC international standard communication format. ALA 1991 awards and new publications related to international librarianship, as well as ALA participation at international meetings, are also briefly described. (MES)

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1991 International Relations Program

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- Expanding Horizons
- Sharing Concerns
- Creating Connections
- Encouraging International Standards

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The Romanian Connection

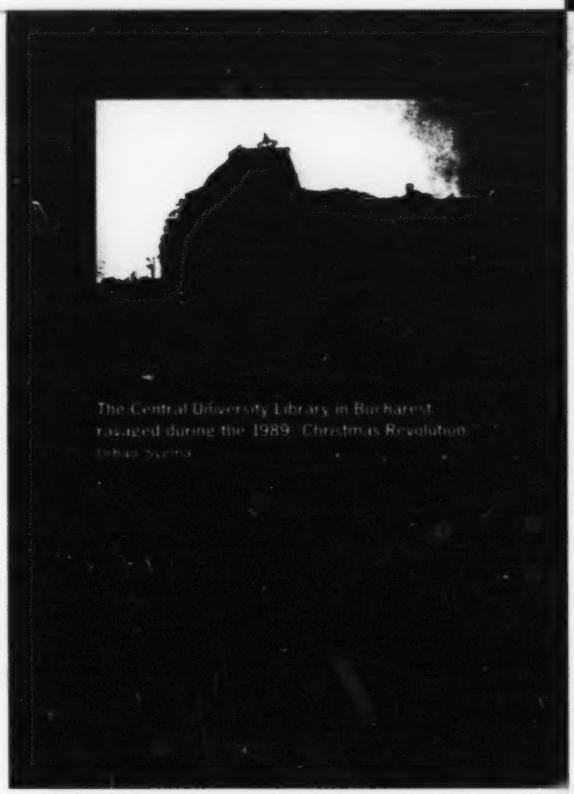
The American Library Association (ALA) pledged at its January 1990 Midwinter Meeting, "to take a leadership role in helping restore libraries and library services in Romania." Since that time, two highly successful ALA initiatives have helped Romanian libraries regain ground lost during the revolution of 1989 and 46 years of isolation from scholarly resources and library development in the rest of the world. Although the charred skeleton of the Central University Library in Bucharest still stands as a symbol of the wrenching changes experienced by the country during the fall of the Ceausescu regime, ALA's Books for Romania Program and its August 1991 Colloquium on Library Science for Romanian librarians have enabled the nation's libraries to make great progress in rejoining the intellectual mainstream.

Books for Romania (USA)

Between February and October 1990, approximately 240,000 books and journals, microfilm products and 14 microfiche readers valued at more than $5 million were donated to Romanian libraries. More than one hundred American scholarly associations, foundations, libraries, publishers and private individuals responded to the call from from ALA's Disaster Relief Committee which coordinated the book drive. Opritsa Popa, project coordinator, emphasized that only substantive scholarly information and current publications on topics selected by the Central University Library in Bucharest were to be sent. The United States Information Agency (USIA) funded the shipment of four huge containers of books and journals from its New York warehouse to Constanta, Romania. A fifth shipment was underwritten by the Brother's Brother Foundation, a nonprofit organization which distributes gifts-in-kind (books, medical supplies, etc.) worldwide. The staff at USIA's library in Bucharest sorted the materials and directed them to universities, polytechnics and research institutions throughout the country.

Colloquium on Library Science

Yet another fulfillment of ALA's pledge to aid Romanian libraries took the form of a colloquium for the country's librarians on current issues in library services, education and organization. Held in the picturesque medieval city of Brasov from August 10-12, 1991, the meeting featured presentations by thirteen ALA members, all of them nationally known educators and managers, led by the Association's President-elect Marilyn Miller. A generous grant from the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX) made the colloquium possible.



The Central University Library in Bucharest ravaged during the 1989 Christmas Revolution (Irina Sytina)

One hundred and fifty Romanian librarians from public, academic and special libraries, as well as staff members of the new library school in Bucharest attended the ALA colloquium. Sessions were marked by vigorous debate and intensive discussion as participants encountered concepts of library services based upon intellectual freedom, response to community needs, and unrestricted access to information. As one U.S. participant remarked, "Sharing our philosophy of democratic library service dedicated to the benefit of the community with our Romanian colleagues may be one of the most important legacies of the ALA colloquium."

Computer demonstrations also opened new worlds as Romanians librarians enthusiastically searched CD-ROM databases for recent Romanian political history, for entries on Moldavians and vampires, and for maps of Eastern Europe. At social occasions, the Romanians spoke movingly of rediscovering modern Western literature and the struggle for bibliographic control as journal titles and publishing houses appear and disappear virtually overnight. When the ALA librarians visited neighboring villages and towns, mayors and ordinary people greeted them with shouts of "Viva Americanii! Long live the Americans!"

In the aftermath of recent political reforms, Romanian libraries have the difficult task of responding to their communities' high expectations for new services and better access with little additional funding to purchase current materials and technologies. Projects such as Books for Romania and the ALA Colloquium on Library Science offered new hope for the future of library service in this struggling country.

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"As testimony to the effectiveness of the Library/Book Fellows Program," the United States Information Agency (USIA) expanded the program beyond its previous level of support. The $615,000 grant is double the amount awarded last year to ALA by the agency. The additional funds will be used to carry out projects in libraries in Central Europe during 1991-93.

During its five-year existence, the Library/Book Fellows Program has placed dozens of U.S. librarians in working situations overseas for periods of several months to one year. Funded by the USIA and administered by ALA, the program seeks to increase international understanding through the development of professional and personal relationships, to promote the sharing of library resources, and to enable U.S. librarians to enrich and broaden their career experiences.

Twelve American librarians are Library Fellows for 1991-92. In La Paz, Bolivia, a fellow is conducting six-month in-service training for library administration staff at the Banco del Libro. At the University of Iceland, another fellow is teaching courses on library services for children and young adults and working with publishers to increase knowledge of American children's literature in Iceland. At the All-Union Library of Foreign Literature in Moscow, a fellow will give seminars on using American reference resources and evaluating American studies collections. Other overseas institutions hosting Library Fellows during 1991-92 include Humboldt University in Berlin, Germany; the National Library of Egypt in Cairo; and the Israeli Ministry of Education and Culture in Jerusalem.

Fellows work on a variety of projects in their host institutions abroad. Many are involved in designing and implementing automated systems. Others teach in library education programs; catalog and index special research collections; train host-country librarians in automated information retrieval; evaluate and develop American studies collections, and organize national archival collections. One Fellow worked with local publishers to promote the translation and distribution of U.S. books.

Although Fellows have encountered diverse living and working conditions in their host countries, they find the fellowship experience challenging and rewarding and discover that it is an unparalleled way of gaining a better understanding of an unfamiliar culture. 1990-91 Library/Book Fellow Artemis Kirk, who spent three months at the Urban Council Public Libraries system in Hong Kong, said: "From the moment I set foot in Hong Kong until the moment I left, I loved the work, the city and the people. I have become a different and a better person for the experience."

Another 1990-91 Fellow, Michel Perdreau, worked at the National Library of Haiti during serious political and social turmoil in the country. He found that in spite of the unpredictable conditions, the staff of the library welcomed him and were very helpful. As a result, he was able to accomplish a great deal in his six months at the library, albeit "with some variation and not exactly as planned."

Under the terms of the USIA Library Book/Fellows grant, the USIA solicits proposals from overseas host institutions for fellowship projects—with the additional funding particular attention will be paid to Central Europe—and ALA recruits and hires the Fellows and monitors their work abroad.

1990-91 Library Fellows Mary M. Wagner and J. David Martin. Philip Mrozinski

"I have become a different and a better person for the [fellowship] experience."

"Libraries help people acquire, and most importantly, maintain, the essential tools of learning"

ALA Leads International Library Response to "World Conference on Education for All"

Participants at the "World Conference on Education for All" held in Jomtien, Thailand, from March 5-9, 1990, made an ambitious attempt to devise a framework for solving the problems of education worldwide. One thousand educators, government officials, social scientists and other policymakers from 155 countries and more than 150 non-government organizations, produced an aggressive plan to solve education problems by the year 2000.

"Every person. . .shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs," the report asserts. It calls for reducing adult illiteracy by 50%, developing basic skills training for youth and adults, expanding early childhood learning programs, and providing information to all in a new spirit of collaboration and partnership. The report does not, however, fully recognize the role and importance of libraries in the educational process.

To remind government officials and policymakers that libraries throughout the world work with educators, governments, community groups and families in support of education, the ALA Executive Board directed the ALA International Relations Committee (IRC) to prepare a document outlining a global response to the World Conference final report. A task force, under the able direction of IRC chair Anne Haley, completed the document, "Libraries as Partners in Meeting Basic Learning Needs," in May 1991.

The IRC document explains how libraries enrich the early childhood environment, are critical to learning achievement in primary schools, and are essential in meeting the diverse learning needs of adolescents and adults. The importance of libraries in both school and non-school settings and their role in support of lifelong learning and community literacy programs are emphasized. "Libraries help people acquire, and most importantly, maintain, the essential tools of learning—literacy, numeracy, oral expression, and the capacity for problem-solving." The document describes a study in India which found that 18% of adult graduates of literacy programs became illiterate again and 38% required refresher courses when there were no reading materials available after literacy training.

By offering examples of outstanding library services and programs around the world—from the traveling "box libraries" of rural Pakistan to the telecottages of Finland and Venezuela's biblio-buses—the document shows how libraries meet community education and information needs with a variety of strategies. It concludes that libraries in every country must be included in the communications network of government, education and community organizations that formulate educational policy and programs. "Libraries are central to the goal of basic education for all."

"Libraries as Partners in Meeting Basic Learning Needs" was sent to ALA affiliates and divisions for comment before it was submitted to the ALA Council at the 1991 Annual Conference. The Council and the ALA Executive Board both endorsed the document. It was presented to the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) at that organization's 57th General Conference and Council Meeting in Moscow in August 1991. Due to the "coup" in Moscow, the IFLA Council did not convene its second session and thus, no action was taken in Moscow. If endorsed by IFLA, the document will be then distributed through IFLA and UNESCO channels to government officials around the globe.

Perestroika Cataloged

Bibliographic records produced by the All-Union Book Chamber of the Russian Federation (the former Soviet Union) may now be made available worldwide in the UNIMARC international standard record communication format. This unprecedented achievement is the result of three years of intensive negotiations between the Library of Congress (LC) and the All-Union Book Chamber as part of the U.S.-U.S.S.R. Bibliographic Exchange Project. "The quality and quantity of the Soviet bibliographic records will make them a valuable product to bibliographic utilities and libraries such as LC," according to LC cataloging specialist and former ALA Library Fellow, Randall Barry.

"The quality and quantity of the Soviet bibliographic records will make them a valuable product to bibliographic utilities and libraries."

The U.S.-U.S.S.R. Bibliographic Exchange Project grew out of an ALA sponsored seminar held at LC in July 1988. During the U.S.-U.S.S.R. Seminar on Access to Library Resources Through Technology and Preservation, which was funded by the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX), staff from the All-Union Book Chamber expressed interest in developing a computer program to convert their cataloging records in their national bibliography, Knizhnaia Letopis', to the international UNIMARC format.

A protocol was signed by the seminar participants calling for the exchange of national bibliographies beginning in 1989. LC agreed to work with the Book Chamber in creating a program to convert current cataloging records, and specifications for the program were drafted before the Book Chamber staff returned to Moscow. Other planned exchange projects include a reconciliation of differences between Russian and Anglo-American cataloguing rules, cooperation in name authority control, and conversion of the Book Chamber's more than three million manual bibliographic records to machine-readable format.

In August 1989, IREX sponsored a visit of two LC specialists to Moscow: Natalia Montviloff, of the Slavic Section of the Shared Cataloging Division, and Randall Barry, a MARC standards specialist in the Network Development and MARC Standards Office. At this second meeting of project participants, the main topic of discussion was the differences between U.S. and Soviet cataloging rules. In particular, records for multivolume works and for items in monographic series presented complex technical problems for the conversion program. Another meeting was deemed necessary to resolve them.

After many difficulties in arranging for a return trip to LC, in June 1991, Natalia Nikolaevna Gruzinskaia, chief cataloger in the Department of National Bibliography, and Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Ratnikov, head of programming in the Department of Automation, arrived in Washington D.C. for the project's final bi-national meeting. After a week of consultation, the participants announced that the major goals of the project had been reached. The Book Chamber now has a computer program to process its current cataloging records in the UNIMARC standard format. In the intial implementation, cataloging information in the records will be transliterated into roman script for the convenience of the many libraries that handle only romanized records. Because a large number of the differences between Russian and U.S. cataloging have been eliminated, the Book Chamber UNIMARC records will be particularly useful in the West.

All of the agencies involved in this outstanding and groundbreaking project—the All-Union Book Chamber, the Library of Congress, the International Research and Exchanges Board and the ALA—have helped to make possible a new era of cooperation between U.S. and Russian libraries. The success of the U.S.-U.S.S.R. Bibliographic Exchange Project holds promise for future international cooperative library ventures as bibliographic bridges continue to be built between East and West. LC and the Book Chamber are currently negotiating the terms of an exchange agreement and the possibilities for a new MARC service for Russian cataloging records.

Wedgeworth, Stueart win IFLA posts

Robert Wedgeworth, dean of the Columbia University School of Library Service, was elected president of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) at the association's 57th General Conference and Council Meeting in Moscow, August 1991. Wedgeworth is the first U.S. President of IFLA since University of Michigan's William Warner Bishop was elected in 1931. IFLA was founded in Edinburgh, Scotland, on September 30, 1927. Also elected to the IFLA Executive Board at the Moscow conference was Robert D. Stueart, dean of the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at Simmons College in Boston.

Awards

The 1991 Mildred L. Batchelder Award for the outstanding translated book published for children by a U.S. publisher went to Dutton Children's Books for *A Hand Full of Stars*, by Rafik Shami, translated from the German by Rika Lesser. ALA's Association for Library Service to Children gives the award.

Hwa-wei Lee, director of libraries at Ohio University in Athens, won the 1991 Humphry/OCLC/Forest Press Award for International Librarianship. The award, $1,000 donated by Forest Press, is given each year to an individual for significant contribution to international librarianship.

Connie Wu, engineering resources librarian, Library of Science and Medicine at Rutgers University was awarded the 1991 Bogle International Travel Grant. Wu attended the International Conference on New Frontiers in Library and Information Science in Taipei, China and presented a paper. The $500 award is given to an ALA member participating for the first time in an international conference either in the United States or abroad.

New publications

Information Freedom and Censorship World Report 1991, compiled by the London-based Article 19 National Centre on Censorship, features a country-by-country analysis of recent progress and setbacks in freedom of opinion and expression worldwide.

U.S.-U.S.S.R. Colloquium on Library Service to Children, September 12-21, 1989, is a collection of papers given by seven Soviet and five U.S. librarians at the forum held in Moscow in 1989. Among the topics addressed are education for children's librarians and the effect of library service on children's reading habits.

Strengthening the U.S.-Japan Library Partnership in the Global Information Flow contains speeches in both English and Japanese from the Fourth U.S.-Japan Conference on Library and Information Science in Higher Education, held in Racine, Wisconsin, in October 1988. The collection addresses important topics in academic librarianship and details the history of library cooperation between the U.S. and Japan.

Pamphlets, posters and promotion kits for four new "Let's Talk About It" reading and discussion themes related to the Columbus Quincentenary were published. Among the themes are "New American Worlds: Writing the Hemisphere," which includes the readings, *The Handmaid's Tale* and *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.

ALA Participation at international meetings

ALA was represented at a variety of international meetings. A partial list follows:
57th IFLA Council and General Conference, Moscow, U.S.S.R.; Canadian Library Association, Montreal; International Conference on New Frontiers in Library and Information Science in Taipei, China; Colloquium on Library Science, Brasov, Romania; Frankfurt Book Fair, Germany; Ontario Library Association, Canada; IFLA Public Library Standing Committee, Plymouth, England; Public Libraries Authorities Conference, England; "Library Exchange," People's Republic of China; Pacific Northwest Library Association, Edmonton, Canada; U.S.-Thailand Educational Foundation, Bangkok, Thailand; Association of Caribbean University and Research Libraries, Caracas, Venezuela; Seminar on the Role of the National Library in the Life of a Nation, Moscow, and the library fellows officially represented ALA at numerous meetings in Hungary, Poland, Yurgoslavia, Egypt, Israel, India, Hong Kong, Spain, Venezuela, Greece, Haiti, Pakistan, Brazil, Botswana, and Barbados.

Thanks to . . .

Without the financial support of organizations such as the United States Information Agency and the International Research and Exchanges Board and others, the international relations activities described in this brochure would not be possible. In these times of reduced budgets, it is encouraging to know that important work which seeks to create connections between peoples and nations goes on.

The American Library Association expresses its sincere gratitude to all the agencies and individuals whose contributions of personal and financial resources have ensured the success of its international programs. ALA recognizes their commitment to increasing international understanding and cooperation through projects such as those outlined here and joins with them in reaffirming that commitment as political and social boundaries continue to fall throughout the world.

Robert P. Doyle
Director
Library/Book Fellows Program

Founded in 1876, the American Library Association is the world's oldest and largest association. Its mission is to provide leadership for the development, promotion and improvement of library and information services and the profession of librarianship in order to enhance learning and ensure access to information for all.

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